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# WHY THE JEW IS SCEPTICAL

*A. R. Exley*





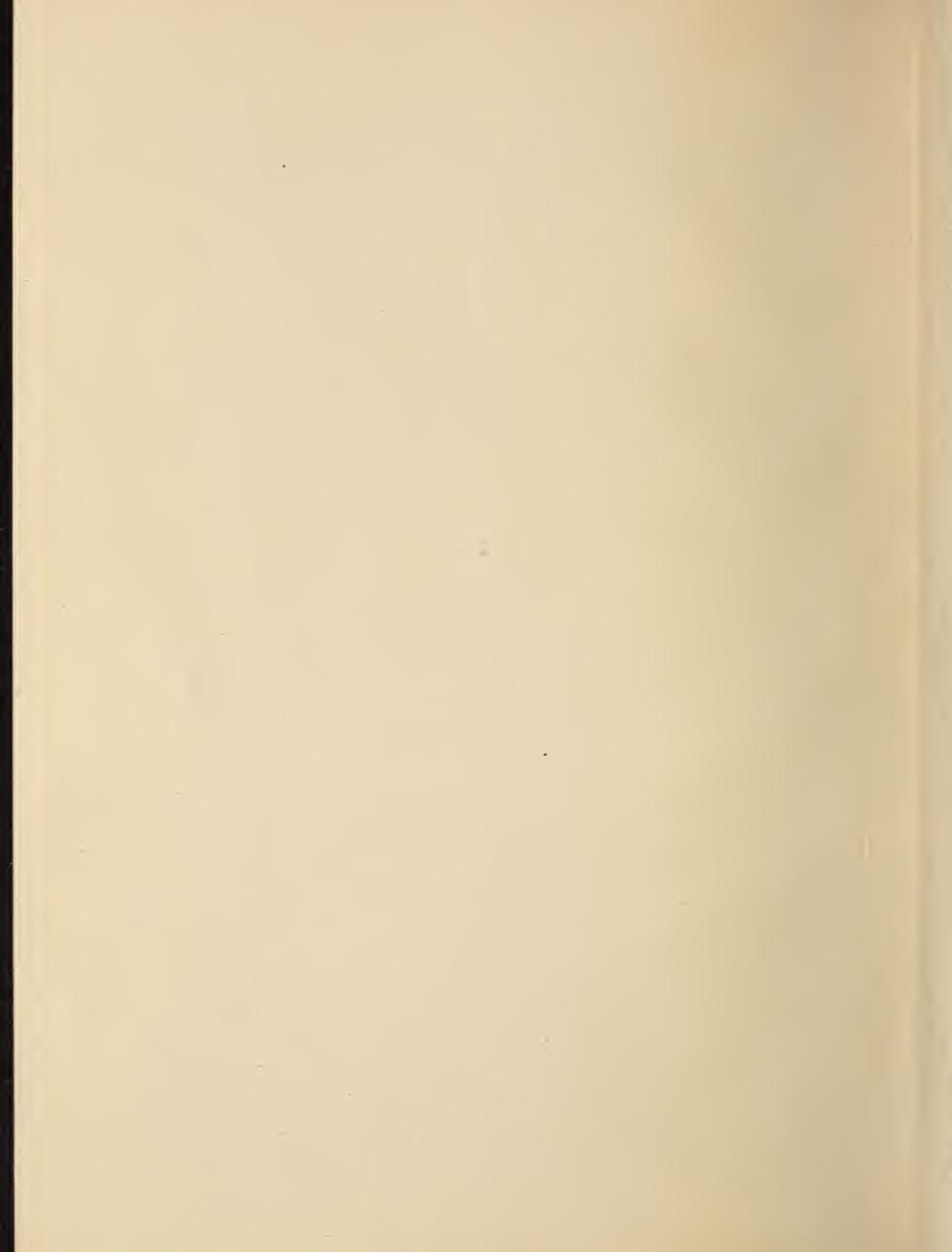
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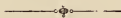
A. R. EXLEY

TO

# "Why the Jew is Sceptical"

BY

M. S. LEVY



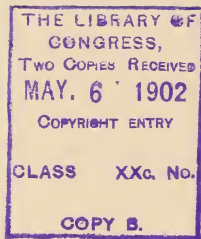
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REPLY BY A. R. EXLEY

TO

“WHY THE JEW IS SCEPTICAL”

BY M. S. LEVY

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“ When Lazarus left his charnel cave,  
And home to Mary’s house returned,  
Was this demanded—if he yearned  
To hear her weeping by his grave ?

Where wert thou, brother, these four days ?  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die,  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,  
The streets were filled with joyful sound,  
A solemn gladness even crowned  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !  
The rest remaineth unrevealed,  
He told it not—or something sealed  
The lips of that Evangelist.

“ This truth within thy mind rehearse,”  
That in a boundless universe  
Is boundless better—boundless worse.

“ And men, thro’ novel spheres of thought ”  
Still moving after truth long sought,  
Will learn new things when I am not.

“ Thou hast not gained a real height,”  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite.

“ The highest mounted mind, he said ”  
“ Still sees the sacred morning spread ”  
“ The silent summit overhead.”



# “WHY THE JEW IS SCEPTICAL”

BY RABBI M. S. LEVY

OF CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

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From time immemorial the Jews have been charged with being a stubborn, stiff-necked, unbelieving race; throughout Christendom and also throughout crescentdom this is held an undeniable truth; and, indeed, so it is. We are a “stubborn, stiff-necked, unbelieving race”; our Holy Bible teems with instances thereof; our historians abundantly testify thereto, and ourselves deny it not.

Whence comes this malady of the mind, so peculiar to our race? Why out of so many millions of human beings who are ranged beneath the banners of Monotheism stands the Jew alone pre-eminent on the pinnacle of skepticism? Whatever be the cause, or causes, which the philosophic mind might adduce in explanation of this singularity in the Jewish character, one fact must not be overlooked, as it tends to ex-tenuate that national defect which made a Pascal, somewhat strangely, magnify it into the opposite extreme. Some of the greatest scholars have reminded us that nowhere is the Jew commanded to believe. Hence he is not like the Christian or Mohammedan, compelled daily to make belief a part of his education. His youthful mind is not, like the Chinese foot, cramped within a certain limit, which, setting nature at defiance, molds beauty into deformity.

The founder of Christianity said: “Believe, and thou art safe; disbelieve, and thou art lost”; and millions of human beings tremblingly obey. “Believe,” says Mohammed,

“and it is well; disbelieve, and dread my vengeance”; and hundreds of millions bow obediently to the hero’s mandate.

Mohammed sleeps the sleep of death—but his doctrines live; it no longer requires the reeking scimitar to impress belief upon a reluctant mind. The Circassian mother exclaims: “There is but one God!” and the infant Mussulman responds: “And Mohammed is his prophet.”

The Jew, too, receives his early impressions more through inheritance than conviction ; he, too, believes that he believes ; within his breast credulity sometimes finds a ready admission, and where once thoroughly domiciled, it cannot again find egress ; but like the simple fly within the dionoea muscipula, must remain a dead weight in place of sweetness and honey.

But his faith is not the result of fear; the dreaded picture of eternal damnation is not held up to him to compel belief; he knows of no purgatory for skepticism, nor Tartarus for incredulity. Hence he dares to doubt where his fellow-man trembles to investigate; what with him is merely a measure more or less of milk and honey, with the Mohammedan is more than annihilation.

No reasoning, no argument, nor philosophy can convince a Jew that it is possible for an Israelite to believe that Mohammedism, or Christianity, or Buddhism, or the multitude of other isms contain the only simon pure article for the salvation of the human family; hence his skepticism, his stiff-neckedness and unbelief—hence the world's unkind epithet, "the disbelieving Jew." Notwithstanding this taunt, the Jew is the living witness of God and the only true believer upon the earth's face to-day.

M. S. LEVY.

# “WHY THE JEW IS SCEPTICAL”

BY M. S. LEVY.

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REPLY BY

A. R. EXLEY.

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The preceding in the “Evening Post” of Saturday evening enlisted my interest immediately, because of the sublime theme in the first place, and secondly, because of the standing of the writer, Rabbi M. S. Levy, with whom I have the very great pleasure and no small honor of a personal acquaintance, and for whom I entertain a very great respect. I am sure that those readers who may not have the pleasure of knowing the gentleman personally, one glance at the accompanying picture in that “Evening Post” if they are judges of human nature at all, will convince them of one fact, and that is that the rugged character there delineated is of “adamantine granite,” not easily moved from any position taken—never to be moved except by the most incontrovertible argument, and having no affinity whatever with those characters who “are moved by every wind of doctrine that blows” from all points of the compass at once. Permit me to state that I shall endeavor to approach this subject of the Master in a spirit of the same magnanimity, as displayed by this representative of Moses, and I trust that, unworthy, as I feel myself to be for such a task, may wield the truths of the “gospel” as fairly, and as charitably as my friend and brother has wielded the weapons of the law—the outcome and all results being that on which we may both, I doubt not, ask



the blessing of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the "same yesterday, to-day and forever," through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, to whom be glory, dominion and power, I must add, as the servant of Him to whom all things belongeth.

I shall treat the article, not so much as being the reason why the "House of Israel" is skeptical, as it is the personal reason why the writer M. S. Levy, is skeptical, and yet I think that in the "Alpha and Omega" of his question and answer, the proper keynote has been struck, and that being the case, we are in a better position to really solve the great mystery. In almost the first sentence he says: "We are a stubborn, stiff-necked, unbelieving race, our Holy Bible teems with instances thereof; our historians abundantly testify thereto, and OURSELVES DENY IT NOT." And at the close of this most remarkable analysis of the House of Israel and the characteristics of the Israelites, he goes on to state—"No reasoning, nor argument, nor philosophy can convince a 'Jew' that it is possible for an Israelite to believe that Mohammedism, or Christianity, or Buddhism, or the multitude of other isms contain the only simon-pure article for the salvation of the human family; hence his skepticism, his stiff-neckedness and unbelief, hence the world's unkind epithet, 'the disbelieving Jew.'" With this brief prologue, let us now proceed to examine the article at length. After citing the Bible, their historians and themselves, also as to the stubbornness of the Hebrew race, he then asks this most wonderful and most significant of all questions: "Whence comes this malady of the mind, so peculiar to our race?" To which I reply, "no arrow shot at a venture" could so nearly have hit the mark of truth. Nor could this prescient question have been otherwise framed or garbed in language so well calculated to be its own answer, for as it reverberates throughout all "Christendom" and perhaps all "Crescentdom" the echoes still repeat from crag to



mountain peak, "Whence this malady? Whence this malady?" And the answer follows the echo with lightning speed from dome to dome, from star to star, and the worlds beyond our ken, are, methinks, interested in this most wonderful tale and "angels, methinks, fold their wings," and wait, to know the answer and the remedy for the racial malady.

To know that one has a disease is sometimes the greatest blessing that can come to one—the dangerous disease is that insidious one that not only gives no notice of its approach—but that also gives no "symptom" that it is present; of such were the dangers of the period of the "slow poisoners." It is a distinct gain then to know there is a disease—a malady—and the only question now is: "What is that malady, and whence came it?"

Some years ago, in England, in the very earliest years of railroad building, two men, father and son, had attained great fame as eminent engineers, for the reason they had surpassed their compeers in meeting difficult problems, had successfully built roadbeds over treacherous bogs and morasses, etc., where others had failed, and, as engineers, were at the topmost round of the ladder of such fame. One remarkable defect, however, was theirs—they were both color blind. To the casual observer there was nothing evidently wrong with their "vision." No defect appeared in their eyes, nor anything to indicate that their sight was different from that of the general run of human beings, but there was, and by placing some "colors" before them, the defect became apparent at once. They were both absolutely color blind; they were lacking in that quality of the sight which differentiates the "alloy" from the "gold," or in other words, the "colors" from the "light." So it is possible in many ways for the human mind also to lose the power to detect the false "colors" in reasoning, and while absolutely "sincere" (or "honey without wax," that is, "sincerity," "purity of honey without

the impurity of the wax ") in their efforts to find the truth, yet owing to things intervening, of which they are themselves unconscious, they are most easily misled, and accepting a mixture of truth and error for " Truth " itself, accepting the mixture of " heavily alloyed gold " for the " gold " pure, are readily deceived by such concoctions of drugs and mysteries of alchemy ; and yet if one will only stop for a moment to think, this is not a marvelous thing, for we may say, as was said before: " But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way " (25). He saith unto them, an enemy hath done this. Matthew 13-28.

When this defect of the mind has taken place, the mind itself must be treated for this disease before much can be hoped for, as an eye must be kept in a darkened room sometimes, under the treatment of eminent oculists in order that its pristine power of sight be restored. So, also, must the human mind that has lost the power of reasoning clearly, because it has been abused by a false use of it, or it has become " atrophied " and useless because it has been so long neglected, that its strength has departed, and it needs the most minute doses of milk and water diet to restore its babyhood to health and strength again, before it can have power (teeth) to digest a heartier meal, and so begin that natural (or spiritual) growth which is the summum bonum of true manhood.

Then the good doctor goes on to show that " some of the greatest scholars have reminded us that nowhere is the Jew commanded to believe." This reminds me of a very valuable piece of advice I learned from my father when a child, and if he had left me nothing more by which to remember him, it were more than all the gold of Golconda. " Never be afraid to use your own judgment, and to trust it," were his words to me, " nor count too much on what the world calls its able men, you will find they hold opinions on every side of every

question, and will be useless to you if you accept them as anything more than lights to be tested by your own sense of right and wrong. Use them without letting them use you," was the substance of his remarks. I trust that advice did not fall altogether upon deaf or unwilling ears. It is true that primarily the commandments to the Israelites were not to "believe" but to "do," but no greater error could possibly be promulgated than to draw the deduction from that, that belief had no place in the curriculum of his religion. "Do this, and ye shall live." Deut. 4, 1-2. Now, therefore, hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to *do* them, etc. Exodus 19, 8, "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will DO. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord." "Doing" was the primary factor in the religion of these primitive people in the kindergarten age when the Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, was giving them, his chosen people, their first elementary lessons in that which is always, and ever has been the greatest and most vital lesson for man to learn, namely, "duty to God and man," but if the greatest scholars have reminded us that "nowhere is the Jew commanded to believe," I may answer as Josh Billings answered: "It is better not to know so much, than to know so much that is not so." The Holy Bible teems with instances to the contrary, and while it is true that the "Husk" of doing with the Jew was the more apparent quantity of the "LAW," yet underneath and not so far as to be completely hidden from the sight of man, was the "kernel" in the nut "Faith," also. Why did Abraham take his son Isaac upon the Mount Moriah? Was it faith in God, or was it not? Why were even the bones of Joseph brought up out of Egypt? Was it faith or belief? Gen. 50, 25-26. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my

bones from hence. (26) So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old, and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

Evidently there was an abundance of faith here. Exodus 14, 13-31. "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord," (it often requires more courage to stand still than it does to ("run for it")) and only the belief and faith in the Omnipotence of God was their shield on this wonderful day of trial. (28) And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horse-men, and all the host of Pharoah that came into the sea after them: "There remained not so much as one of them." Such was the answer that God granted to their attitude of "waiting obedience" to His august commandment — "They also serve who only stand and wait." Joshua 1, 1-2. Now after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying (2) Moses, my servant is dead; now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Here is "faith" hidden once again, and therefore, when the Scriptures "teem" with such instances why should we pay any attention to scholars who, no matter what the fame they may have attained may be in other matters, are yet but children of a smaller growth so far as "things spiritual" may be. "Whence comes this malady of the mind, so peculiar to our race?" may well be asked, especially after all the evidence throughout all these ages that has been given with such lavish hands to this "peculiar people." And then our good friend goes on to make these unsupported statements, giving them without a scintilla of evidence to prove them true, merely taking it for granted, that as the Jew is supposed to be "nowhere commanded to believe," that he is in a very paradise of flowery growths, because his mind, not being



called upon either to believe, or not to believe," will naturally be in a most happy condition of perfect rest—the rest that comes to bodies in a "vacuum," that would be. And he makes this most unwarranted assertion, which I defy him to offer one shadow of proof for: "Hence he is not like the Christian (I purposely leave the Mohammedan out—let him look out for himself) compelled daily to make belief a part of his education, his youthful mind is not like the Chinese foot, cramped within a certain limit, which setting nature at defiance, moulds beauty into deformity," to which I very gladly answer: "Very good, if it were only true."

These assertions given without any evidence to prove their truth, weigh nothing in the scales of either judgment or reason, and the good doctor with his ample knowledge of the law of logic, must admit that in this instance at least, he is simply begging the whole question, and modestly asking us to accept his "ipse dixit" without so much as asking if it be true. In fact I am astonished at the celerity with which he has skipped over much that is usually considered to be quite necessary before a logician would occupy such "advanced ground." If it were a writer who was in the habit of rushing in where others of equally cultured and competent minds modestly refrained, preferring to "falter with the angels," or were it a writer such as Shakespeare had in mind when he penned those famous lines: "I am, sir, Oracle, and when I ope' my mouth, let no dog bark," I could then understand the matter, but I know better, and I give the doctor the benefit of the doubt by acknowledging that it is just a "slip," unintentional and therefore no less provoking. To such romantic assertions as these it is a sufficient answer to state that "Chinamen" are not aware they are "turning beauty into deformity" when binding the feet of helpless and innocent children, any more than this "malady afflicted race" is aware they are "turning beauty into deformity" and "joy

into mourning " when they by " binding with cords invisible, though stronger than bars of steel, the minds of themselves and offspring " by the prejudices of twenty centuries that has come down with unabated vigor—twenty centuries of marked and unmitigated prejudice. We look askance at the condition of a " France " that has so fallen in the scale of humanity and righteousness, that it were possible for the farce and tragedy of a " Dreyfuss " to be enacted there? But we must also not forget to cast our eyes backward upon that tribunal that sat in judgment of One of whom the court spake, " I find no fault in Him," and yet, notwithstanding the innocence of the victim, " Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet, saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value " (Matthew 27, 11). And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him saying, " Art thou the King of the Jews ? " And Jesus said unto him, " Thou sayest."

And although innocent, the " Lamb of God," slain before the foundations of the world, also died upon the cross of Calvary at the hands of the people of his own race, well might that question be asked: " Whence comes this malady so peculiar to our race ? " and the historians tell us that when the Jewish capital Jerusalem was destroyed not a single Jew escaped the bloody slaughter under Titus and not a single follower of Christ was harmed. The just vengeance of an outraged God was their portion, as it has been from that day to this. " Men without a king and without a country," having no government of their own, yet wielding the most tremendous influence in almost every government under the shining sun. It is most certainly true as the good doctor points out in his article, " the Jew is the living witness of God ; " but it is not true, and I defy him to place one scintilla of the proof along with his monumental assertion, " And the only true be-

liever upon the earth's face to-day," and not only that, I affirm the contrary, that he is not a true believer at all, nor in any sense whatever. And for this I will proceed to condemn them by their own every day practices in every court and land of Christendom.

The gentleman will admit that Moses is the "lawgiver," that the servant is not above his master, and he will admit also, that Moses gave especially strict injunctions as to the coming of another to whom they should render the strictest obedience. Deut. 18, 15. The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (16). And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken that which they have spoken. (17) I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. (18) And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto *my words* which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him (20). But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. (21) And if thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? (22) When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." And the Scriptures being full of the descriptions of his coming, see Isaiah 2, 1-3: "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," this could not have reference to the Mosaic law, which long years before had been given from Sinai's peak. Jeremiah 31, 31-35. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house

of Israel, and with the house of Judah. (32) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; *which my covenant they brake*, although I was an husband unto them," saith the Lord : (33) " But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days," saith the Lord, " I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts: and will be their God and they shall be my people." \* \* (35) Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea, when the waves thereof roar. The Lord of Hosts is His name. (36) " If those ordinances depart from before me saith the Lord, " then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever." Yes, it is true, the " Jew" is the living witness of the truth of God's word. Where is the Israelitish nation? Scattered to the four winds of heaven and echo answers, Where? Pertinent is the inquiry, " Whence comes this malady of the mind, so peculiar to our race? "

Why should I trace further the prophecies regarding the coming of the " Messiah," St. John 20 : 30-31. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. (31) BUT THESE ARE WRITTEN, THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD; and that believing ye might have LIFE through His name. And the second chapter of the " Actions or doings of the Apostles" gives a complete record of the second giving of the " law " and the issuing of the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, the city of the King of Kings, of the " Law of Salvation through and in Christ," and of the issuing of the word of the Lord from Jerusalem as foretold by Isaiah." And the establishment of the Church on that day of Pentecost, so memorable



because God Almighty had Himself swung back the hands upon the clock of time to the point of "beginning again" a "new era" had dawned upon a benighted humanity, and when the grim tragedy of all the ages had taken place upon the summit of Calvary, when the earth had burst her sides with weeping, when the rocks had lent their cry of horror to the general tumult of an outraged nature, when the sun, and moon, and stars had veiled their darkened visages behind the blackened, scowling clouds that hurried along the skies to carry the news of man's depravity to the nethermost parts of hell and the grave. The "Tragedy" of all the ages had been engraved in blood, and that the "blood of the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty." Isaiah 53: 1-12 "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. (3) He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid, as it were, our faces from him: he was despised and we esteemed him not" \* \* (12) Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great and he shall divide the spoil with the strong because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Well might we ask "Whence comes this malady of the mind?" And yet this peculiar people constantly although unwittingly confess that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. Without a country and without a king, this nationless nation must daily at the shrine of their fetish god of business, bow the knee, and with the tongue confess in every message written to friend or foe, on every bank check accepted or given, on every note of hand signed or receipted for, on every piece of paper that stands as "witness" or as "evidence" of any transaction of business of every degree and kind, must be

adorned with this inscription, else it is valueless, the superscription of the "King of the Jews," and "sealed" with "HIS SEAL" that it is TRUE, before either party can be held by the "law," the "gospel" must stand sponsor for "Anno Domini," (the year of our Lord) 1902. And now where is the statement that the "Jew" is "the only true believer on the earth's face today." Is the "Jew" a traitor to the "King that is to come," or is he both "traitor" to the "Coming Messiah" for whom he still looks, and stultifier of his own conscience and self, by signing and witnessing documents which give the lie to all his protestations, and brand him as one who is either wilfully perverse or frightfully impervious to the dictates of every sense of manhood and self-respect. Is the "Omega" of the doctor's argument, the only correct solution to the Alpha of his inquiries?

I fear it is: "No reasoning, no argument, nor philosophy can convince a Jew." That being the case, why bother about it any more? Why waste time or energy on those who are alike superior and impervious to "reason, argument and philosophy?" You being responsible for placing the "Jew" in this unlucky plight, Doctor, I beg leave to withdraw while you may now have the floor to "extricate him from the mire" into which your logic has forced him, or, perhaps, it would be more appropriate to state it "your extreme candor" has shown him to be.

Thanking you for the spirit of fairness shown throughout your well-timed inquiry and above all for the able and fearless diagnosis of the "disease" of this "mind malady" afflicted "Jew," and then for your admirable conclusion which so thoroughly fits the case, I beg leave to withdraw from this now, for the present, at any rate, trusting that I may never be numbered "with those transgressors who cannot be reached

by either "reasoning, argument, or philosophy." The horns of the dilemma are open to your selection. Take the best. You will find them both "pointed" as those of a Texas steer.

Yours, etc.,

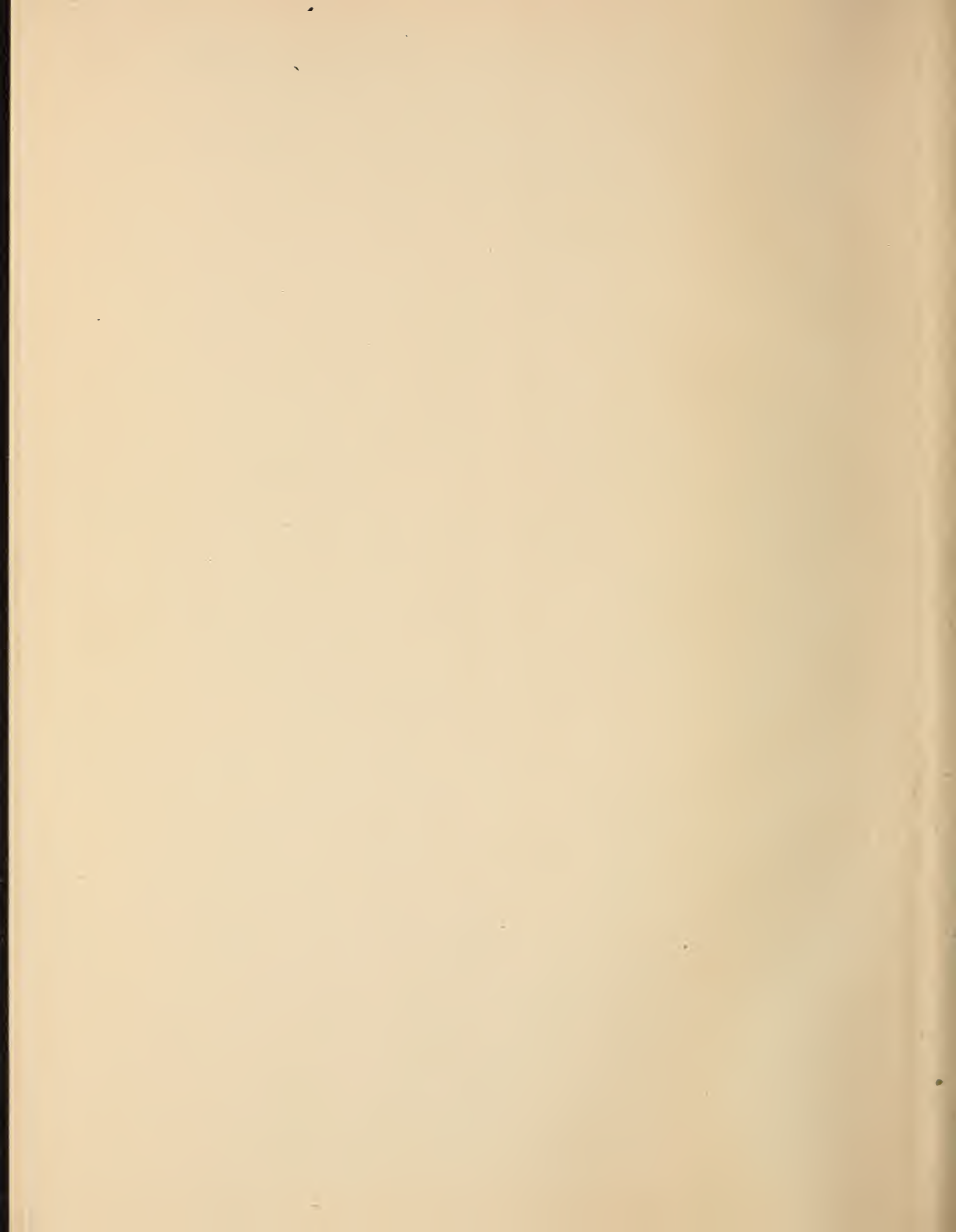


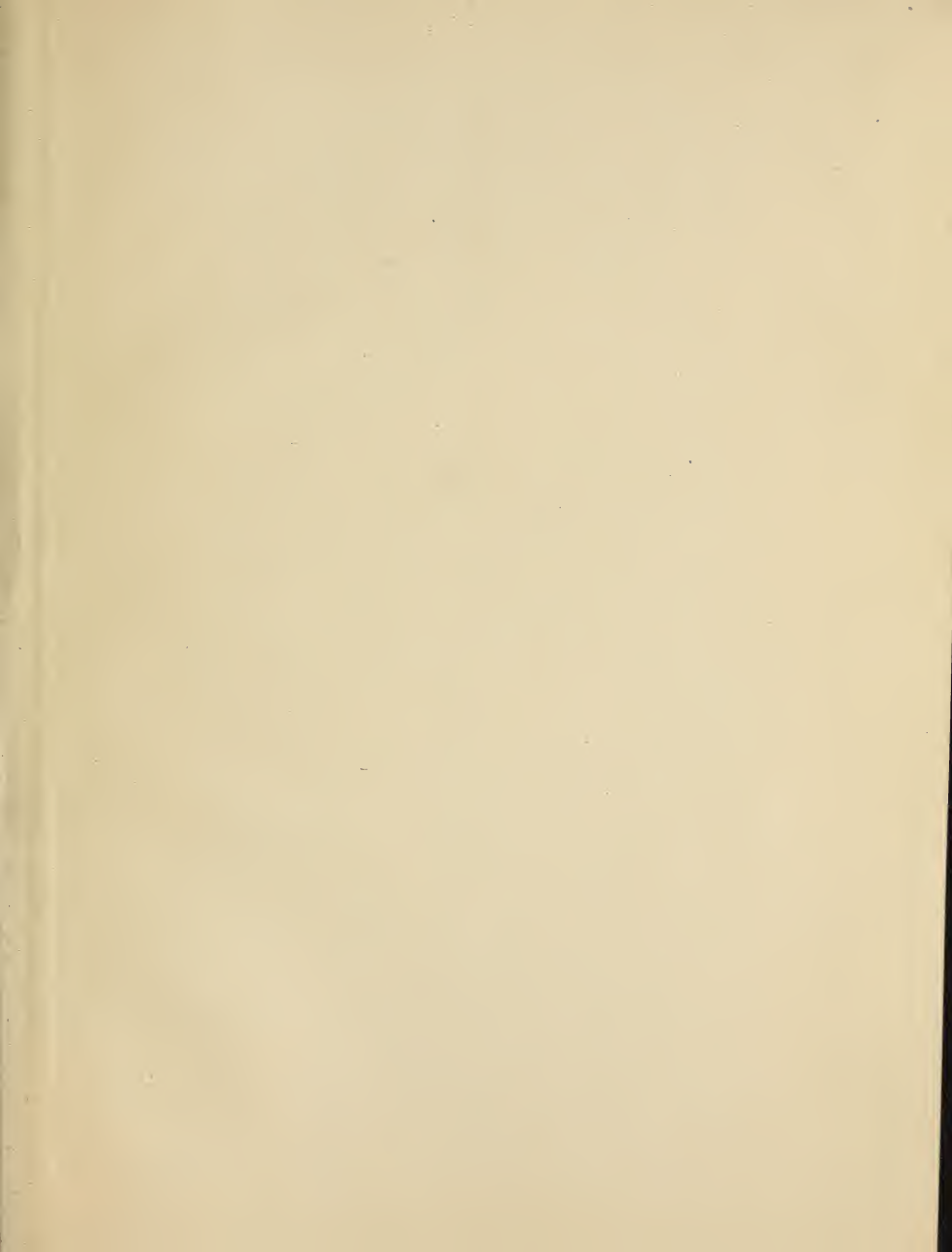
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